

**IN THE CLAIMS**

Please amend the claims as follows:

1. (Currently Amended) A stapler comprising:

a driver that is movable up and down relative to a magazine accommodating connected staples;

a guide surface that guides a movement of the driver; and

a pusher that presses a leading-end staple and the next staple of the connected staples to the guide surface,

wherein at least the leading end staple of the connected staples is formed in a C-shape having an upper portion extending lengthwise and having a first end and a second end, with a first end portion substantially perpendicularly extending from the first end of the upper portion and a second end portion substantially perpendicularly extending from the second end of the upper portion; and

the pusher includes a support surface that contacts a lower surface of the center in the lengthwise direction of the upper portion of the leading-end staple when the driver moves down to push out the leading end staple; and

~~the support surface of the pusher projects from the pusher toward the guide surface such that the contact surface of the pusher will not contact the guide surface in the absence of staples wherein a protrusion surface of the support surface opposed to the leading-end staple slopes in a driving direction of the driver, and~~

there is no gap between an upper surface of the pusher and the protrusion surface.

2. (Cancelled)

3. (Previously Presented) The stapler according to claim 1, wherein the driver includes a pair of leg portions that come into contact with both corners of the C-shaped leading-end staple and push out the leading-end staple.

4. (Cancelled)

5. (Previously Presented) The stapler according to claim 4, wherein the pusher is urged toward the guide surface, and

when the leading-end staple is driven by the driver, the leading-end staple is moved downward toward the sloping protrusion surface, and the pusher retreats in a direction opposite to the guide surface.

6. (Currently Amended) A stapler comprising:

a driver that is movable up and down relative to a magazine accommodating connected staples;

a guide surface that guides a movement of the driver; and

a pusher that includes a contact surface for pressing a leading-end staple and the next staple of the connected staples to the guide surface,

wherein at least the leading end staple of the connected staples is formed in a C-shape having an upper portion extending lengthwise and having a first end and a second end,

with a first end portion substantially perpendicularly extending from the first end of the upper portion and a second end portion substantially perpendicularly extending from the second end of the upper portion; and

the pusher includes a support surface that contacts a lower surface of the center in the lengthwise direction of the upper portion of the leading-end staple when the driver moves down to push out the leading end staple; and

~~the support surface of the pusher projects from the pusher toward the guide surface such that the contact surface of the pusher will not contact the guide surface in the absence of staples wherein a protrusion surface of the support surface opposed to the leading-end staple slopes in a driving direction of the driver, and~~

there is no gap between an upper surface of the pusher and the protrusion surface.

7. (Previously Presented) The stapler according to claim 6, wherein the driver includes a pair of leg portions that come into contact with both corners of the C-shaped leading-end staple and push out the leading-end staple.

8. (Cancelled)

9. (Previously Presented) The stapler according to claim 8, wherein the pusher is urged toward the guide surface, and

when the leading-end staple is driven by the driver, the leading-end staple is moved downward toward the sloping protrusion surface, and the pusher retreats in a direction opposite to the guide surface.